

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1104

September 29, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Secretary Johnson and Secretary Kerry:

As you consider additional locations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) preclearance program, I urge you to include Kansai International Airport (KIX) in Osaka, Japan for participation in CBP's preclearance expansion.

Overseas visits to the United States continue to rise, increasing job creation and improving local economies. According to the Department of Commerce, in 2015, the U.S. received 77.5 million international arrivals, with 3.8 million originating from Japan. Out of these 3.8 million visitors, more than 1.1 million passengers flew out of KIX. Visitors from Japan continue to have a great impact on our economy having spent \$18 billion in 2014, second only to visitors from Canada. Expanding preclearance operations to KIX would allow business and leisure travelers the ability to clear inspection before embarking on flights and bypass further CBP processing upon arrival in the U.S. This would also enhance national security capabilities by allowing CBP to better utilize limited resources while screening travelers before they gain access to U.S. bound flights, and if necessary, deny a traveler the ability to board an aircraft long before reaching the U.S.

With a significant volume of travelers from KIX and presence of major U.S. airlines at the airport, I believe KIX will meet the minimum requirements for preclearance. Including KIX in CBP's preclearance expansion will help improve U.S. competitiveness in the ever expanding outbound tourism market in Asia by providing a comfortable and inviting travel experience to the sizeable portion of passengers from Japan.

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In 2015, CBP announced it would move forward with preclearance negotiations with Narita International Airport – including Kansai International Airport’s participation in CBP’s preclearance operations would further the longstanding trust and security cooperation between the United States and Japan and provide great economic and national security benefits. I strongly support Kansai being part of CBP’s preclearance expansion initiative and request an update on this process including any outstanding issues that are left to be addressed. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mazie K. Hirono". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator